

so, that she be mindful of the Siniora Government. It's very important that this Government in Lebanon succeed and survive.

Everybody abhors the loss of innocent life. On the other hand, what we recognize is that the root cause of the problem is Hizballah. And that problem must be addressed, and it can be addressed through—internationally by making it clear to Syria that they've got to stop their support to Hizballah.

Listen, Syria is trying to get back into Lebanon—it looks like to me. We passed United Nations Resolution 1559, and finally this young democracy—or this democracy became whole—by getting Syria out. And there's suspicions that the instability created by the Hizballah attacks will cause some in Lebanon to invite Syria back in, and it's against the United Nations policy, and it's against the U.S. policy.

**Q.** There's a Deputy Army Chief of Israel who said that for this offensive to reach its goal will take weeks. Are you comfortable with that kind of timeframe? Are you comfortable with letting the offensive go on for weeks?

**The President.** I want the world to address the root causes of the problem, and the root cause of the problem is Hizballah. I also—and we've been, of course, in touch with Israel. Condi spoke to Prime Minister Olmert yesterday on the airplane flying back. And we're never going to tell a nation how to defend herself, but we are urging caution when it comes to the survival of the Siniora Government. It's essential that the Government of Lebanon survive this crisis.

We've worked hard to free—and “we” being the international community—worked hard to free Lebanon from Syrian influence. And there's a young government there. And it's in our interest that Syria stay out of Lebanon and this Government survive. And so in our consultations with countries in the neighborhood, we have urged all to address the problem—that would be Hizballah and its terrorist attacks on Israel.

Remember, this started—this crisis started when Hizballah captured two Israeli soldiers. They were unprovoked—Hizballah were unprovoked, and they then took hostages. Imagine how the United States would react if somebody provoked us with that kind of

action—and secondly, started firing rockets. And it's this provocation of Hizballah that has created this crisis, and that's the root cause of the problem.

All right, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:57 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel. A reporter referred to Maj. Gen. Moshe Kaplinsky, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Israel Defense Forces.

### **Memorandum on Assignment of Reporting Functions Related to Russian Debt Reduction for Nonproliferation**

*July 18, 2006*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Assignment of Reporting Functions Related to Russian Debt Reduction for Nonproliferation

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and section 1321 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107–228) (the “Act”), I hereby assign to you the functions of the President under section 1321 of the Act.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

### **Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Importation of Certain Goods From Liberia**

*July 18, 2006*

On July 22, 2004, by Executive Order 13348, I declared a national emergency and ordered related measures blocking the property of certain persons and prohibiting the importation of certain goods from Liberia, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–